

Grizzly

Vol. 1 No. 5 November 2006

www.calguard.ca.gov/CAAG-MS/



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WELCOME BACK!

40th Corps Support Group (CSG), 49th Military Brigade, 49th Battalion, and 756th Transportation Company. You have distinguished yourselves through patriotic and dedicated service and made the California National Guard proud. The transition back to the 'real world' can be difficult. Things have changed and so have you and your family. Take your time readjusting and be tolerant of those things that are different. While deployed, you thought every day of your family and friends and pray to be able to reunite with them. Remember those prayers and be thankful for having made it home safely – and don't forget to tell your friends, co-workers, and family how important their support was to your success.

As has been the case since the horrific events of 9-11-01, the CNG has been busy both training and conducting real world missions. This month alone our Soldiers and Airmen fought wildfires in southern California, medically evacuated four children from Mexico, assisted the Border Patrol and Customs,

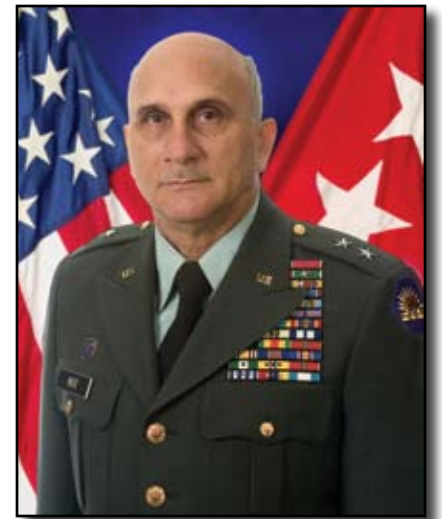
and continued to train in preparation for deployments. As if this wasn't enough, on August 10, 2006 Governor Schwarzenegger ordered the Guard to provide assistance to various airports following a foiled Al Qaeda plot to explode aircraft traveling from the United Kingdom to the United States. The increase in the federal terror alert level and new security procedures that followed precipitated the need for the Guard presence. Guardsmen eventually numbered more than 600 at seven major airports: Los Angeles, San Francisco, Burbank, San Jose, Santa Ana, Ontario and San Diego.

On September 14, after a little over one month, Guardsmen began re-deploying from the airports. The decision came following ongoing discussions between officials at the supported airports, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security (OHS), the California National Guard (CNG) and the Transportation Administration (TSA). Though the current threat level remains heightened, airport security expressed confidence that the mea-

sures and resources that are currently in place are sufficient to address the threat without the need for a continued Guard presence.

But life goes on despite these myriad challenges. November 11th marks another Veteran's Day that finds our country still at war. On this day, the California National Guard will have soldiers and airmen deployed to every major theater of operation around the world. On this day, I ask that you take time to remember those who toll every day and stand the wall that separates freedom-loving people from the tyranny of terrorism everywhere. It is the selfless service of these patriots – citizen soldiers just like yourself – that maintain world peace and make it possible for everyone to realize their dreams.

And just as important, thank you for everything you do for the California National Guard, the State of California, and the United States of America.



Maj. Gen. William H. Wade II

ENLISTED VIEW

I want to provide you with my biased perception for the enlisted view of the California National Guard for today and the future. Obviously, I look at our guard through the "tainted" eyes of an enlisted member that has had the opportunity to visit Soldiers and Airmen and see the impact of our decisions. We are now more technically and operationally better trained and experienced than we have been at any other time in the history of the American military. In the past 15 years, the Army and Air National Guard have been tasked and relied on more now, than at any other time in history. Then what should we do to make Soldiers and Airmen successful for the future? We need to be accountable! We need to set the example that they can carry on for years to come. We can't just talk enlisted care, we need to live it. Following through on the minor issues with as much intensity as you would with a major challenge, shows our commitment to a Soldier or Airman's well being.

In the last year and a half the California National Guard has had negative publicity "sabos" fired across our bow. We didn't let that

dictate how we do business. We addressed our "nay-sayers" and pressed on doing God's work. Our enlisted force doesn't want to get caught up in the politics of running this great machine, but they are aware and understand the movements of it all. More importantly they are in tune with the movements that go on within their organizations and see if senior leadership deals with these movements on the up and up. They all know when a favored person is taken care of and others are not. We are mentoring them whether we know it or not, and they learn their lesson well. We must ensure that all of our selection and appointment processes are above board and leave no perception of impropriety.

Communication, or lack of, is the culprit that causes most problems within an organization. Information flow must reach all levels that have a need to know. Too often we take it for granted that the "word" reached the lowest ranking members, but in reality never did. There is nothing more frustrating for a senior leader than to feel out of the loop. Can you imagine what a young Soldier or Airman feels

like when asked to do something, but isn't included in planning or discussions? They after all, are the ones that make us look good when the job is done at the end of the day. It doesn't hurt to give a pat on the back for a job well done. Or better yet, awards of recognition for outstanding service. A reward we will probably reap at retention time.

Everyone wants to feel like they are really part of that family. In order for them to feel included we need to make sure we are including them. In the last few years we have transitioned into a new National Guard of warriors with active duty war fighting experience against today's terrorist threat. Airmen and Soldiers, side by side in some instances, fighting the common enemy with no thought to the cultural differences of the uniforms they wear.

Young Soldiers and Airmen will inherit this Organization. If we want to continue to be proud of our National Guard, we need to prepare them for the tasks at hand and those yet to come.



Command Chief Master Sgt. Henry V. Fernandez

Grizzly Newsletter

Vol 1. No. 5 November 2006
The Official Newsletter of the
California National Guard

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Grizzly

The Holidays are upon us. It is a time of celebration and reflection. For approximately 5000 of our California National Guard members and their loved ones, it is the first Christmas since deployment. We certainly have much to be thankful for! However, there are many of our Soldiers and Airmen that remain deployed. Our prayers go out to you. Enjoy the mess hall 'Holiday Meal' and know that soon you will be able to enjoy a home cooked meal with no trays, thin plastic table cloth, or bench seating.

Thank you for your article and picture submissions. Remember to send pictures that tell a story. Avoid posed or portrait style pictures.

DESIGN A HOLIDAY CARD!

The Holidays are fast approaching and we are looking for original artwork and messages to feature in the December Grizzly.

Submissions are open to all California Guard members, their families and children.

Deadline is November 24, 2006.

Email or mail your card to
Capt. Villarreal, Box 3, 9800 Goethe Rd,
Sacramento, CA 95926.

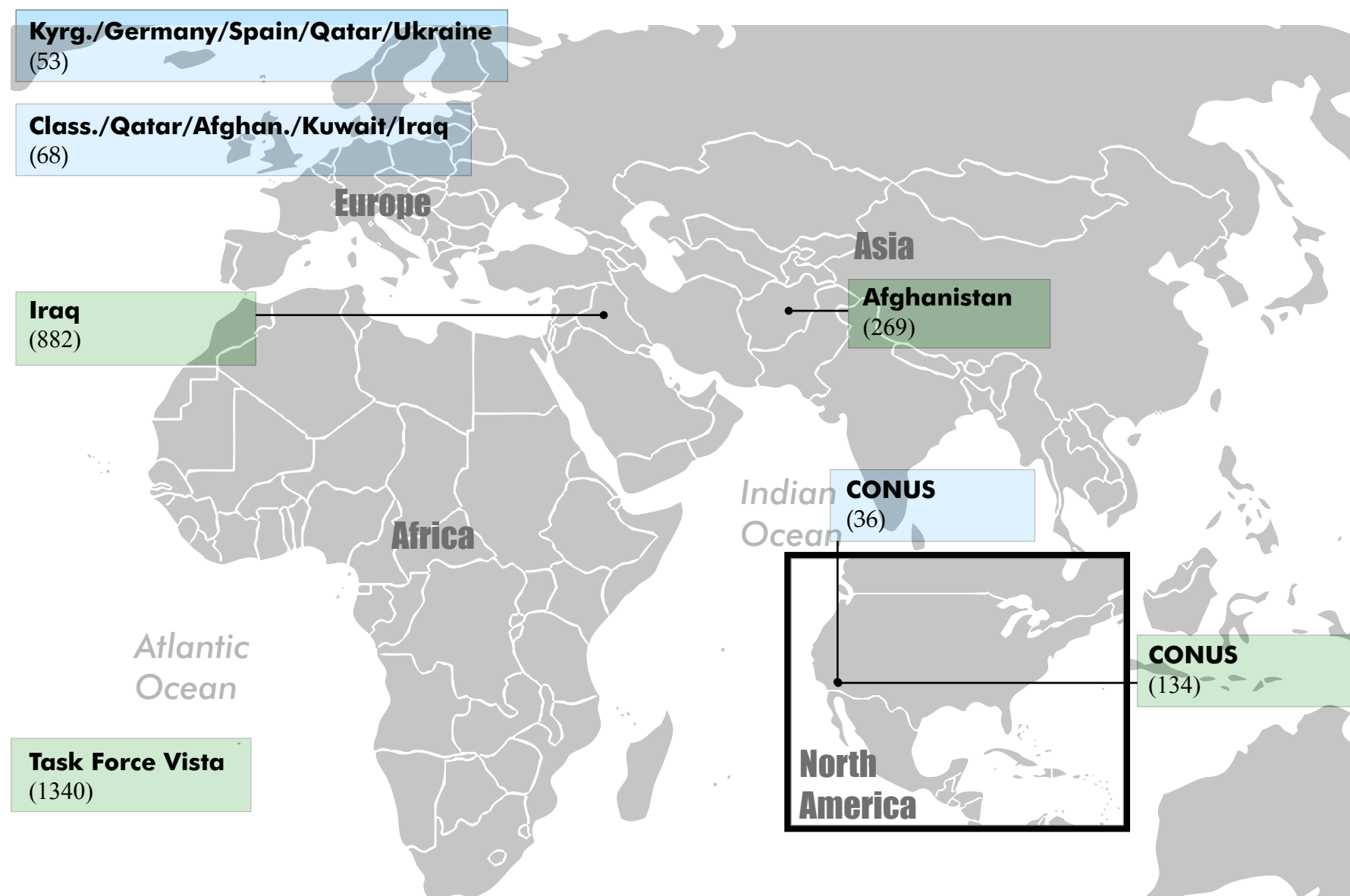
Include name, unit, contact number
and age (for children).



Cover photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jesse Flagg

Where We Are

The California National Guard as of Oct. 2006



Motorpool

By Sgt. Eddie Siguenza

EL CENTRO, Calif. – The day isn't complete until Sgt. 1st Class Alan Travelstead's band of hands completes its dirty deed.

The platoon leader for the California National Guard's motor pool unit based here for Operation Jump Start speaks positively about Joint Task Force Vista's assistance to the California Customs and Border Patrol. Travelstead oversees a gung-ho crew of motor vehicle mechanics, a crew that has earned notoriety since June's inception for the southwest border mission.

"It's like every day we're put to the test. And every day we come through," Travelstead said. "As far as putting vehicles back on track, we've been successful. And we have the facts to back that up."

Thirty-one Guardsmen rotate duties with Customs and Border Patrol mechanics to keep services going. Pending the extent of damages, vehicles return to the field as quickly as they come in for repairs. Vehicles aren't restricted to Hummers and sport utility vehicles, CBP's bread-and-butter desert transportation units. Guardsmen also repair all-terrain vehicles, quadrunners, motorcycles and off-road buggies.

"They've just been giving us a tremendous helping hand," said Edgar Jime, CBP shop supervisor. "Overall, the product we're getting is a lot better with them here than without them."

Travelstead said the "undisclosed" goal is to avoid having CBP vehicles sent to an outside contractor for repairs. "It depends on the damage," he added. "But if we can fix it, we'll fix it. And we'll probably do it better than if it did go somewhere else."

Four to eight working bays at El Centro's Sector Fleet Garage are regularly stuffed with vehicles. Routine maintenance, such as oil changes and tune ups, are done daily. There are special cases such as damaged underbody frames and broken suspensions when more than one Guardsman gets his hands dirty working alongside a CBP mechanic. But no vehicle returns to the field unless it is safe and cleared for operation.

"One of the biggest jobs is air-conditioning," Travelstead explained. "Sometimes we'd have to go inside the vehicle and pull the entire dashboard out. It's a lot of work, but has to be done."

Since June, the Guard has dramatically assisted in dropping CBP's vehicle repair expenses. In one critical week in September, Travelstead said the motor pool serviced 70 vehicles, 15 ATVs and repaired 70-plus tires. Again, nothing returns to the field unless it is safe and operable.

"They've been excellent. They've been extremely helpful."

Through their success, there are plans to extend the Guard's repair services to bus operations, Travelstead noted. There's an adjacent shop strictly for buses that come in for services. No Guardsmen currently works there.

"But who knows," Travelstead said. "It's only October. We may end up there. You never know."



PHOTOS: SGT. EDDIE SIGUENZA

Customs and Border Patrol vehicles get daily treatment from California National Guardsmen serving under Joint Task Force Vista. Here, Spec. Jeff Wasson greases up bearings on an SUV.

Spec. Vincent Cheatham (green coveralls) and Sgt. Gerardo Cervantes work the underbody of a Customs and Border Patrol vehicle.



The Saddam Hussein Trial

By Lt. Col. Robert Spano

In a heavily guarded courthouse in the middle of Baghdad, a cross-section of fifteen people were provided the opportunity to witness Saddam Hussein and five other defendants go on trial for revenge killings against a group that tried to assassinate him in 1982. The group selected to watch this historic trial included Iraqi journalists, Department of State employees and others that somehow found their way into highly sought venue. Shedding my uniform for civilian clothes, I was the sole military representative on this particular day. The rules for attendance were very strict, and included high security escort in and out of the courtroom grounds, as well as limited mobility once inside the courtroom viewing area. We were searched numerous times, including an electronic body scan to make sure we didn't bring in weapons or recording devices. The only items we were authorized to bring inside the courtroom viewing area were a pencil and a journal. Once seated, we were all provided a set of wireless headphones, so we could hear the English translation of the arguments. As we waited for the trial to begin, I struck up a conversation with some of the Iraqi journalists. They seemed quite enthusiastic about the opportunity to witness this historic event, and from the look in their eyes did not seem to be a fan of the former dictator. One particular journalist, explained in broken English that his cousin was killed by Saddam Hussein's henchmen, and he looked forward to the day when the former President will be convicted and executed, so that justice may be served.

As Saddam Hussein and his co-defendants were brought into the courtroom, his defense team of 12 attorneys stood in recognition as his status as the former President of Iraq. The Judge, Raouf Abdel-Rahman, an Iraqi Kurd, brought the courtroom to order by reading a set of rules for the days proceedings. Saddam stood quietly and listened to the judge then sat down in the defendant's designated seating area. It didn't take long for the trial to get exciting, as lawyers for both sides started arguing, accusing each other of perjury. The root of the accusations were based on testimony provided by one of the defense witnesses, in which he claimed that an Iraqi Shiite that was killed by Saddam Hussein as an act of revenge for attempting to assassinate the former President, is actually alive and well. This infuriated the prosecution team causing a stormy argument amongst every-

one, including one of the defendants, Bazran Ibrahim, Saddam's former intelligence chief. Bazran Ibrahim walked to the podium and chided the Chief Judge, accusing him of taking sides with the prosecution. The Chief Judge threw Ibrahim out of the courtroom, then recessed the court so order could be attained.

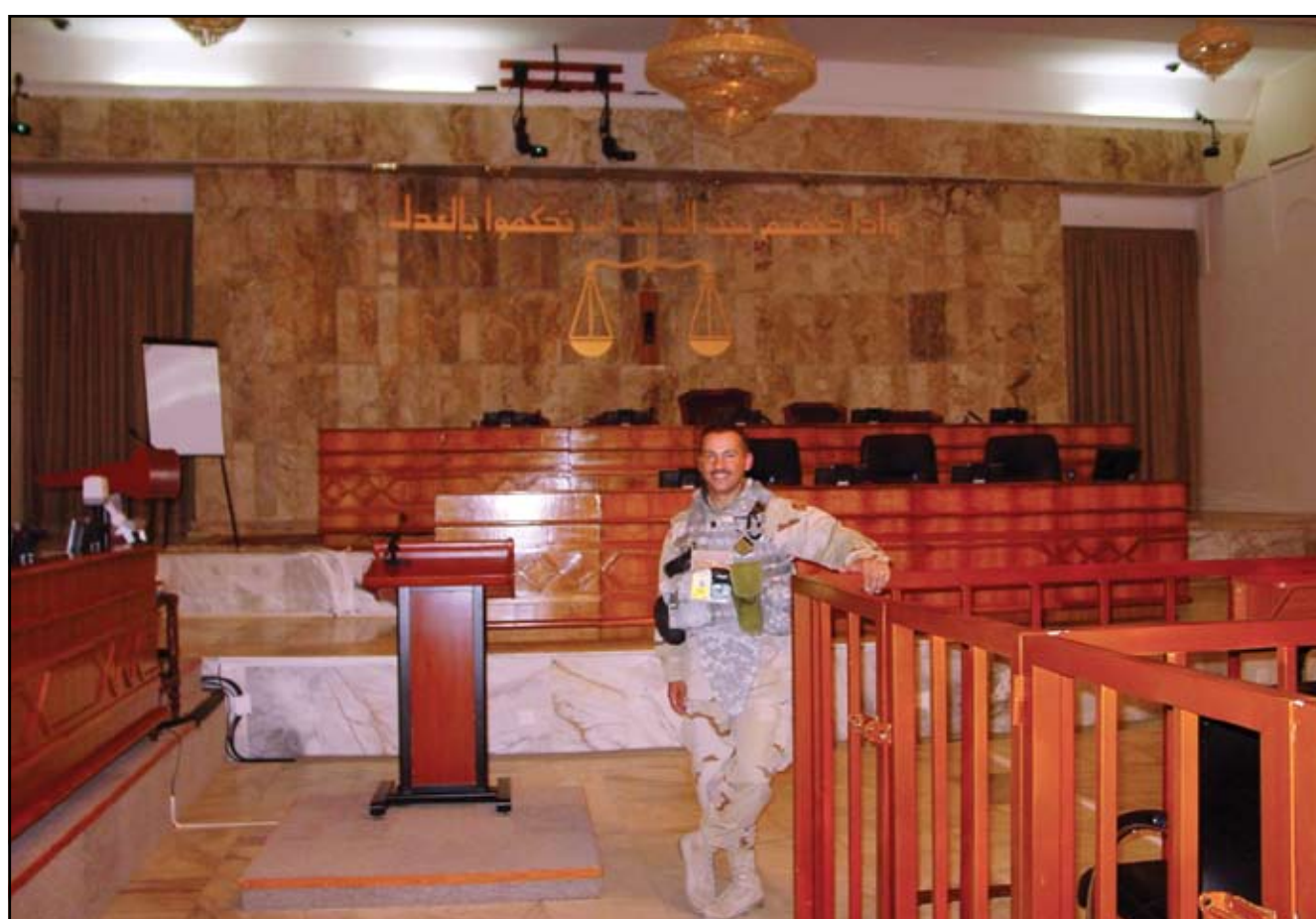
Later in the day another witness was called to the stand by the defense team. The witness sat in a booth covered by a curtain so his face could only be seen by the judges and the lawyers questioning him. Tension in the court grew when the witness claimed that Chief Prosecutor Jaafar Al-Moussawi tried to bribe him to testify against Saddam. He claimed that Al-Moussawi tried to give him \$500 to say that Saddam arrested and killed his father. Al-Moussawi leapt from his chair and immediately challenged the testimony, accusing the witness of delivering an elaborate lie developed by the defense team. Judge Abdel-Rahman once again had to call order to the court.

At this time Saddam Hussein decided to approach the podium,



and in a very presidential manner, looking directly into the cameras, addressed the court, saying the verdict and sentence were already decided, and the people of Iraq should protest the court proceedings. The Judge promptly cut off Saddam's microphone and told him to sit back in his chair. The Iraqi journalists I was sitting with became quite emotional when Saddam was talking. The mood felt like more of a sporting event rather than a trial, as the invited Iraqi guests were cheering when the Judge would slam the defendants, and boo when Saddam would attempt to address the court.

After court adjourned for the day, the invited guests had to remain in the court viewing area until the defendants were removed from the grounds. We were then escorted to our secure transportation and driven back to our initial meeting point. Overall the experience was one I will never forget. It was a glimpse into the mind of a dictator that once ruled a country, and now stood powerless, his fate being decided by a system no longer under his rule. One thing for sure, he will not be sitting in jail for years if sentenced to death, as the sentence is to be carried out within 30 days of the verdict being read.



49th Military Brigade Returns from Iraq



Nearly 100 soldiers from the California National Guard's 49th Military Police (MP) Brigade arrived at Oakland International Airport, following a year long combat tour in Iraq. They were joyfully greeted by family members at the airport.

The brigade commander Col. Rodney Barham addressed the brigade in somber tones, "I am proud of each of you for what you did to help create the new Iraq...but with this success, came a cost."

That loss came in the form of Sgt. 1st Class Isaac Shawn Lawson, a member of the 49th who was killed in action during their deployment. Lawson was killed by a roadside bomb just outside of Baghdad on June 5, 2006. As a fitting tribute, the Fairfield Armory was dedicated in his honor. Coming home without one of your brother-in-arms is always a time of sad remembrance and reflection. As a soldier's soldier, he epitomized the role of an NCO with his guidance and concern for soldiers under his charge.

The 49th MP Brigade was activated into federal service on May 17, 2005 and arrived in Iraq in October, 2005. The 49th's tour in Iraq was significant as more than 3000 active and reserve component soldiers from all over the United States fell under its command during its involvement with Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

During the 49th's OIF tour, the brigade was tasked with the important mission of training of Iraqi Police throughout the country. Since 2006 has been designated the "Year of the Police" by the DoD and the State Department, 49th

MP Brigade Soldiers were instrumental in the training and mentoring of the newly formed Iraqi police force.

Since arriving in Baghdad last October, the 49th MP BDE had various duties in the historic and chaotic capital of Iraq. While the training of Iraqi police was a main component of the mission, the 49th displayed a "good neighbor" policy with the local population. A humbling moment was when the 49th MP BDE met with the families of fallen Iraqi

Police officers. These families braved the war-torn streets to meet at Iraqi police headquarters. The 49th MP BDE gave them bags of food and other household items; as well as goodies for the children of the impoverished city. Most importantly, however, they offered their condolences to their loved ones ultimate sacrifice upon the Iraqi altar of freedom.



PHOTOS: SFC MICHAEL AMLEY



756th Transportation Company

More than 100 soldiers from the California National Guard's 756th Transportation Company (TC) arrived at various airports throughout California on October 14 following a year long combat tour in Iraq.

The 756th Transportation Company was stationed at Camp Taji, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. During their 12-Month deployment, the unit conducted 210 combat logistics patrols. The unit delivered over 11 million gallons of petroleum products to coalition forces. This was directly due to the skills of the drivers. Missions included: Petroleum product transportation, Gun truck support and Fire suppression teams which have operated over 300,000 miles in a hostile environment with a flawless mission and safety record (over 300 days - 0 accidents).

The 756th Trans (POL) excelled in the Combat Theater of Operations. The unit became the first organization to deploy from the California Army National Guard under the new US Army modular force configuration with the 4th Sustainment Brigade (formerly 4th ID DISCOM).

Maj. Gen. William H. Wade II praised the soldiers of the 756th Transportation Company saying, "The 756th Transportation Company returns to California after a year in Iraq and joins over 22,000 other citizen soldiers and airmen of the California National Guard as combat veterans and individuals deployed for the Global War on Terrorism. I and the rest of California's community-based defense forces welcome them home with a heart-felt 'Well done' for their outstanding performance of duty and patriotism as part of America's Army."

The following are recognized as top performers during the deployment.

Truck Platoons: Spec. Alvin Catubig completed over 67 Combat Logistic Patrols.

Maintenance: Spec. Gregory Hensiek completed over 800 organizational maintenance job orders.

Gun Truck Platoon: Spec. Benjamin Boone completed over 100

Combat Logistic Patrol force protection missions.

Golf Company: Spec. Amanda Ronquillo and Spec. Marisol Vela performed 300 continuous days of Force Protection and Quick Reaction Force duty.

Company Headquarters: Sgt. Joel Forsythe conducted around the clock coverage to keep critical automation and communication systems Fully Mission Capable.

Congratulations to the following nine 756th Trans. Soldiers who became U.S. Citizens while deployed: Spec. Mary Berumen, Spec. Bautista Catubig, Spec. Ricardo Estrada, Spec. Metellus, Spec. Alfonso Medina, Spec. Avila Navarro, Spec. Roberto Remigio, Sgt. Rudolph Serrano, Spec. Cristy Tabinas



PHOTOS: SGT. 1ST CLASS ROBERT PACK



Retain Pride, Drop Arrogance

By Maj. Steve Fetrow

In my office there are pictures of my great grandfather in his Warrent Officer Marine Corps uniform, my grandfather in his WWII Army dress uniform, my father in his Navy uniform, my uncle in his Air Force uniform, my brother-in-law in his Navy uniform, and finally a picture of myself in my dress blue Army uniform. I still have one picture to add. I am trying to convince my wife to give me one of her pictures in uniform; she served as a Military Police in the Army Reserve for almost nine years. Every year during November, I reflect with great personal pride my family's deep heritage and four straight generations of military service. I am grateful for the many lessons learned both as a child growing up in a military family and now as an adult with almost 16 years of military service.

In November, we celebrate Veteran's Day. This is a day of great significance to the military community. I recited my Oath of Office on Veteran's Day 1990! It is a day when we reflect upon the sacrifices and efforts of the many service members who have served before us and alongside us. There is another memento in my office, one more somber than the pictures of my family members who served with pride in the US military. I have a set of dog tags with the name 2nd Lt. Luke James who died in service to his country in Iraq. 2nd Lt James was a student of mine when I served as an Assistant Professor of Military Science at Oklahoma State University. I will never forget the day that I received word that 2nd Lt. James died. I was serving in Iraq and received an email at our Tactical Operation Center, it broke my heart. It is a reminder to me that some of our friends, loved ones, peers, and comrades have shed their own blood and sacri-

ficed their own lives in service of this nation.

What I have discovered over the years is that we in the military will talk with pride about our missions and our deployments. We will display our coins, our awards, and other "decorations" that will initiate conversations and "war stories." I have heard stories from soldiers that draw out intense emotions within me... anger, sorrow, excitement, joy, etc. I served as an MP in Iraq and I have a few good stories of my own that I will share with anyone willing to listen for a few hours. We are proud of our service. We wear military t-shirts, put military stickers on our vehicles, fly military flags in our yards and some of us even name our pets (or even children) after something of military significance. We are proud of our service and we should be.

And while we are so often open to sharing our stories of victory, triumph, and pride, we too often do a great job of hiding our failures, our fears, and our needs. In a day when deployments are the norm instead of the exception, many of us will experience some difficult and painful moments. Many of us will deal with situations and circumstances that may have a great emotional impact upon us. When the body is pierced, it bleeds. When the soul is pierced, it also bleeds. No, we can't often see the emotional damage like we can the physical, but it is still there. And when we get hurt, the logical and healthy thing to do is to seek assistance.

I have a stubborn friend. He is an "old school" infantry officer. He was involved in an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) explosion while on a convoy in Iraq. He injured his neck and shoulder. How-

ever, instead of seeking medical treatment, he "soldiered up" and drove on. The problem with this was that in the long run, his injury forced him to a stretcher, multiple surgeries, and now the possibility of life-long rehabilitation. Don't get me wrong, there are times when a soldier is forced to drive on even when he or she is hurting. However, being highly motivated is no excuse for mistreating your body. The same is true for the mind, the heart, and the soul. When we are hurt, we need to have the courage to address these issues.

The California National Guard is going to great lengths to provide soldiers with services and resources to assist in addressing the various complicated and often painful issues that arise when serving our country. We are working together with Tri West to place embedded mental health resources at the armory level and have achieved success in 33 armories across the state to date. We are spearheading efforts to provide screening and assistance to both deploying and redeploying soldiers. We are assisting with the vital peer-to-peer training program, the marriage enrichment program and the sexual assault prevention and response program. The mental health team is proud to have the opportunity to serve the finest soldiers in the country!

My challenge is simple. During this Veteran's Day, retain the pride, drop the arrogance. Maintain the pride in your service, your country, your state, and your unit. Drop the belief that you can do all things on your own, in your own strength and that you never need help with anything. Help is available if you need it.



Brief biography:

Major Steve Fetrow recently replaced both Major Philip Holcombe and Major Eric Frye at Joint Force Headquarters in Sacramento. He is the current Director of Mental Health for the California National Guard. Major Fetrow is an MP and a combat veteran. He completed two Master's programs and a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology and is currently completing his third Master's program en route to licensure in California. Major Fetrow has a passion to assist soldiers and is available for individual consultation. You can reach Major Fetrow at:

Voice – 916-854-3019
Cell – 916-240-3477
steven.fetrow@us.army.mil

VA Benefits

For a list of benefits for California Veteran's log on to <http://www.cdva.ca.gov/cdva/benefits.asp#vhc>. This website is designed to confer and administer the benefits provided by a grateful State of California to its deserving veterans and their dependents. More specifically, to provide California veterans and their families with aid and assistance in presenting their claims for veterans' benefits under the laws of the United States; to provide them with beneficial opportunities through direct low-cost loans to acquire farms and homes; and to provide

the state's aged or disabled veterans with rehabilitative, residential, and medical care and services in a home-like environment at the California Veterans Homes.

Some benefits include:

- ★ College tuition fee waivers for veterans' dependents
- ★ Disabled veteran business enterprise opportunities
- ★ Veterans homes of California

- ★ Property tax exemptions
- ★ Motor vehicle registration fees waived
- ★ Disabled veteran license plates
- ★ Free license plates
- ★ Veterans claims representation
- ★ Fishing and hunting licenses
- ★ Employment and unemployment insurance assistance
- ★ Calvet farm and home loans
- ★ State parks and recreation pass
- ★ Business license, tax and fee waiver
- ★ Veterans preference in California civil service examinations
- ★ State of California veterans cemetery

1114th Transportation Arrives in Iraq

By Capt. David Como

The 1114th Transportation Company, from Bakersfield, CA, mobilized out of Fort Bliss, TX and arrived in Al Asad, Iraq in August 2006.

The company, which is comprised of soldiers from all over the state of California, replaced the 220th Army Reserve Unit from Keene, New Hampshire. The 1114th TC led by Company Commander Capt. David Como from San Diego and 1st Sgt. Paul Gomez from Fresno.

The 1114th hit the ground running, delivering more than 125,000 gallons of fuel weekly to local Army and Marine Corps units. The soldiers are also conducting Line Haul missions to ten outlying Forward Observation Posts and Combat Operating Posts located throughout western Iraq.

The soldiers of the 1114th are more than just truck drivers; using mounted weapon systems they are responsible for the security of the fuel they provide, which is needed to keep the many units running. The roads in the Al Anbar Province are especially rough taking a heavy toll on soldiers and equipment alike.

Although their jobs are demanding and the conditions are dangerous, the soldiers of the 1114th are excited to be apart of the War on Terrorism and continue to perform the mission.

The soldiers of the 1114th are a mosaic of personalities ranging

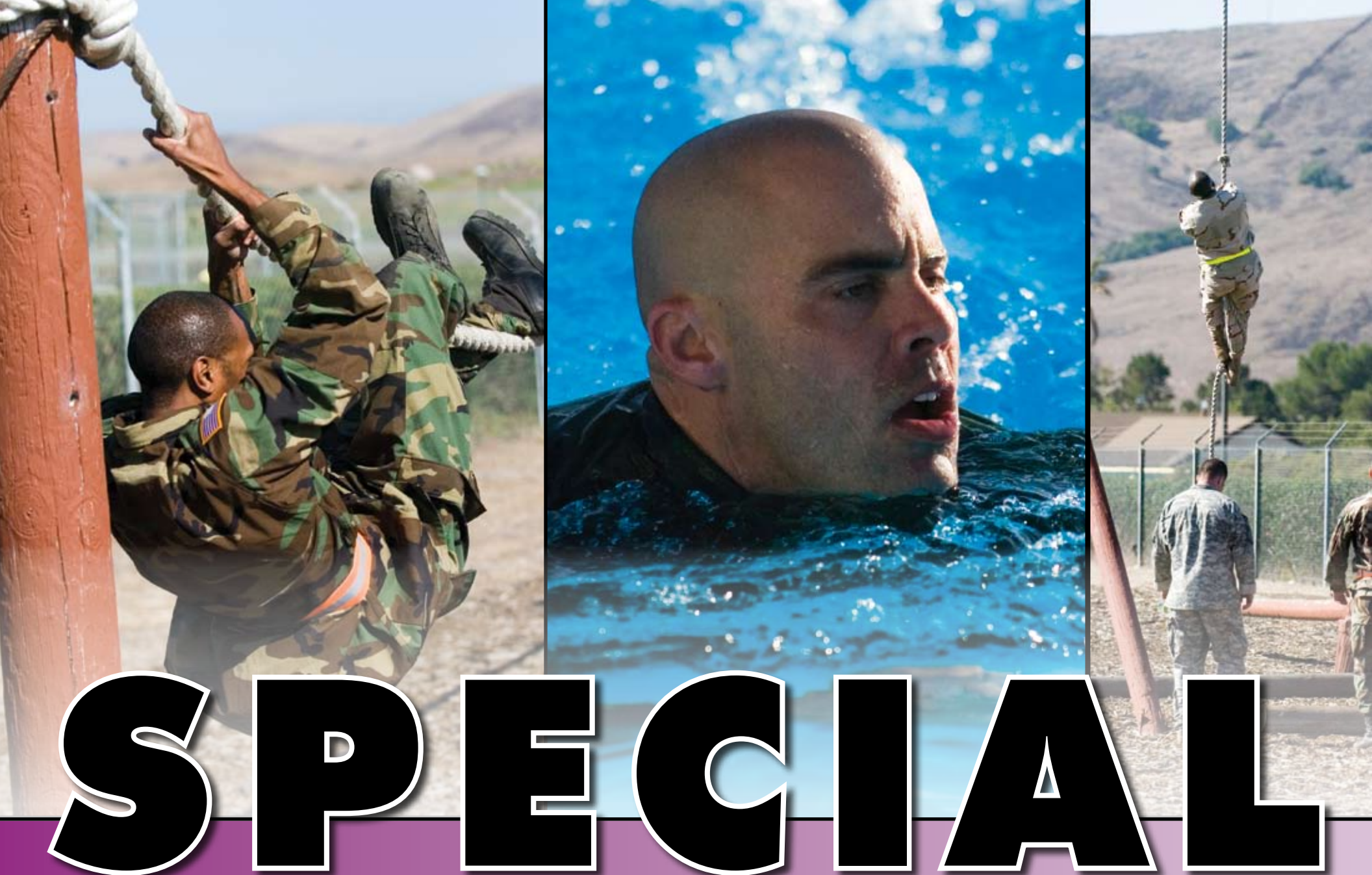
from traditional Guard soldiers serving their second or third tour to newly enlisted soldiers to soldiers with close to 20 years of military service.

Soldiers find various things to do when not conducting missions. Pvt. 1st Class Louie Alvarado Benavidez competed in the Marine Corps 5 Kilometer Race at Al Asad Air Base and earned 3rd place. Benavidez has been running since High School competing in various Track and Field events. Spec. Brandon Walker will compete in the body building competition. Walker has been training for many years and plans to continue to compete after he returns from the deployment. Sgt. Jeromy Goodnight sings and plays the guitar. He has written and recorded eleven country western songs and plans to release a CD in November. Goodnight has been writing songs for about ten years. Spec. Karina Celiz is studying journalism at San Diego State University and is currently collecting photographs for a documentary that she will produce on the mobilization and deployment of the 1114th Transportation Company.

Soldiers have been operating in a variety of missions and are certainly looking forward to a positive deployment. Many of the soldiers are on their second or third tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, passing on their knowledge and experience to support those who are encountering their first deployment.

1114th in convoy to deliver much needed supplies.

1114th maintain proficiency by qualifying with their assigned weapons.



SPECIAL

Readiness Evaluation

Alpha Company 5th Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group held a Special Forces Readiness Evaluation (SFRE) in October.

The SFRE is 24 grueling hours comprising of approximately a dozen military tests. The SFRE is designed to assist in the selection of soldiers for attendance to the Special Forces Qualification Course. This program evaluates each soldier's capabilities by testing his physical, emotional, and mental stamina.

The SFRE began with an Army Physical Fitness Test, which requires the soldier to attain 81 points per event using the 17 to 21 year old recruit standard.

Next, a 50 meter swim in full gear was conducted. Participants then showered, ate a meal and marched to an obstacle course. The obstacle course offers two challenges. First is negotiation, the soldiers must negotiate the first course with a buddy. It is a timed event, but it is also tests teamwork. Leadership both good and bad emerges.

According to the senior staff that runs the training, the course is designed to challenge the soldiers both mentally and physically.

"This is an opportunity not all sol-

diers get," said Staff Sgt. Benito Vizcarra. "Most new recruits or soldiers who signs up for the SF go straight into the obstacle course with no prior knowledge of what the course entails, this is where you can get a taste of what to expect and at least develop a technique on what works best with you and your body to maneuver through an obstacle course like this."

The final physical exam is a road march. A minimum of 55 pounds are carried for an undisclosed distance. The march is imperative as soldiers learn how difficult it is to carry full gear and maneuver quickly.

Training for and participation in most special forces real world missions are arduous, hazardous, and often sensitive in nature. For these reasons, every prospective Special Forces Soldier must successfully complete a 3-week Special Assessment and Selection Course (SFAS). The SFAS gives soldiers a taste of the mission they are to embark on.

After completing the SFAS, each SF soldier receives extensive training in a specialty, which prepares him for his future assignment in an SF unit. SF units are designed to operate either unilaterally or in support of and combined with native military and paramilitary forces.

Since 911 there has been a new wave of patriotism. There is a noticeable change in SFRE selection candidates. Candidates now are more experienced, dedicated and they know they can do bigger and better things in their private civilian life and in the National Guard. National Guard members who have deployed to Operations Enduring or Iraqi Freedom come back with a wealth of experience. They pass down lessoned learned and survival skills that benefit their unit and the entire National Guard.

Prior to 9-11, the California National Guard was sending 1-2 soldiers to the Special Forces Qualification Course, currently there are 22 Calguard soldiers attending.

The California Army National Guard Special Forces reputation has changed so much that Active Duty Special Forces is saying they need Guard guys.

Note: The Special Forces Readiness Evaluation is administered quarterly. For more information contact 562-795-2362 (Los Alamitos) or 650-369-2082 (Redwood City).



PHOTOS: SPEC. MICHAEL AMICY



PHOTOS BY SPEC. MICHAEL AMICY



FORCES

By Capt. Mirtha Villarreal & Spec. Michael Amicy





143rd Change of Command

Col. John Munoz Atkinson, commander of the 40th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, passes the 143rd Field Artillery regimental colors to incoming commander Lt. Col. E. Ian Falk. Lt. Col. Curt R. Salveson relinquished command to Lt. Col. E. Ian Falk



184th Change of Command

Sgt. Maj. Joseph Salas grasps the 184th Infantry regimental colors moments before passing them to Lt. Col. Kenneth P. Mackenzie for the final time at the Modesto armory. Lt. Col. Kenneth P. Mackenzie relinquished command to Lt. Col. Dirk A. Levy



1-143rd Color Guard

Soldiers from the 1-143 Field Artillery, recent veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom, stand ready to carry forward the national and regimental colors for the change of command ceremony. Twin brothers Spec. Andrew (far left) and Sgt. Anthony (far right) De Paoli of Sebastopol flank Sgt. Scott Odenbrett of Pleasonton (second from left) and Sgt. James Keogh of Concord.



F-16 Taxies in

Capt. Don Charleton, an F-16 pilot with the 194th Fighter Squadron, finishes up his cross-country flight from Ft. Smith, Arkansas. The Block 32 F-16 is a new addition to the Fresno ANG Base fleet resulting from the BRAC process.



A Mother's Mission

Since February, Karla Comfort has logged hundreds of miles in a specialized Hummer. Comfort's son Marine Lance Cpl. John M. Holmason, and nine platoon members of the 7th Marines' 2nd Battalion, Foxtrot Company, died December 2005 in Iraq. Comfort's vehicle artistically depicts pictures of her son and his platoon buddies. Everywhere she goes, Comfort receives gratitude from others whose sons and daughters claimed the same fate.

Moment of Reflection

Col. David Nickels, Lt. Col. Emily Perry and Lt. Col. Sonya Lucas take a moment to reflect during the 49th Personnel Service Battalion's Change of Command Ceremony. Lt. Col. Emily Perry relinquished command to Lt. Col. Sonya Lucas.



Pictures by:
Lt. Col Spano
Maj. Dan Markert
Spec. Micheal Amicy
Sgt. Eddie Siguenza

144th Civil Engineer Squadron Deploys

By 1st. Lt. Heather L. Pratt

Eighteen members of the 144th Fighter Wing deployed Oct 16 for two months of training at Ft. McCoy, Wisconsin before deploying for six months in the United States Central Command area of operations. Deploying members will be part of the Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers (RED HORSE). RED HORSE is a highly mobile civil engineering response force to support contingency and special operations world wide.

"I'm excited that the 144th Civil Engineer Squadron was chosen to be part of this RED HORSE deployment," said Lt. Col Gary Kellogg, 144th CES Commander. "It is an excellent opportunity to perform the mission that we train for and support our great country. I'm proud of our troops and I'm highly confident in their skills and abilities to successfully complete the mission."

Before embarking on their RED HORSE mission, airmen get wishes of good luck as they get onto the plane.



PHOTOS: SENIOR MASTER SGT. CHRIS DRUDGE

A final group photo before heading off to support U.S. Central Command to support operations worldwide.

A familiar scene. A family bows their head and prays for the safe return of their citizen-soldier.



Californians Respond to TroopFest 2006

By Sgt. Eddie Siguenza

Californians demonstrated their generosity and support for the U.S. Military in late September as close to 3,000 attended TroopFest 2006 aboard the USS Hornet in Alameda.

The "party of all Bay Area parties" helped raise funds for service members in Afghanistan, Iraq and other conflict areas. More so, it brought awareness of California's support and dedication to its brave citizens.



PHOTOS: SFC MICHAEL AMICY

"This means a lot to the Soldiers, Marines and everyone on the front lines, to see people actually care," said Brian Bonafede, one of TroopFest's organizers. "People are coming from everywhere. They're here for the troops. They know we have to keep supporting them."

This is TroopFest's third session, yet it has never been as elaborate. Bonafede said just a few months ago, he confided with co-hosts Julie DeMaria and Ret. Marine Lt. Timothy Curtin prior to the second TroopFest. Held as a "backyard barbecue," organizers raised roughly \$7,000 among 300 attendees. The trio immediately knew they can generate more funds by expanding the helping hands.

DeMaria, co-founder of Operation: Care and Comfort, headed the effort. Her all-volunteer committee focuses on producing care packages strictly for troops abroad. At TroopFest, the group sold t-shirts and souvenirs to generate funds for those packages.

"By doing this, I feel I'm serving my country," said DeMaria. "Operation: Care and Comfort is a chance

for citizens to step forward and do something for the troops. They're over there doing something incredibly important for us." "If people like me don't do something, who will?" DeMaria added. "The main message is we want people to know our military is alive and well. We just have to keep supporting them. And we want the troops to know support is here. And it'll always be here." Operation: Care and Comfort is based out of the American Red Cross Santa Clara Valley Chapter in San Jose. Ninety percent of TroopFest 2006 proceeds go directly to the operation.

* As the holidays approach, Operation Care and Comfort will continue preparing packages for troops stationed overseas. For information on ways to help, visit [\[careandcomfort.org\]\(http://careandcomfort.org\) and/or email inquiries to \[troopsupport@com-cast.net\]\(mailto:troopsupport@com-cast.net\). You can also contact Julie DeMaria at \(408\) 373-8635.](http://www.operation-</p></div><div data-bbox=)



Deterriing Terrorism Linguists in Ac

By Capt. Mirtha Villarreal and 1st Sgt. Darren Quackenbush

FORT ORD, Calif. - In the mountainous terrain of Fort Ord, U.S. Forces approach a small middle eastern community cautiously in order to gather sensitive and mission essential intelligence.

For the next 36 hours, several soldiers with B Company, 223rd Military Intelligence Battalion were exposed to real world scenarios like those they may encounter during deployments. The MI soldiers evaluated the mock village and its people for political leadership and affiliations, economic stability and means and basic patterns of behavior. The role of the village people was played by Defense Language Institute students.

"It is imperative that the HUMINT collection teams conduct realistic training it prepares them for the broad spectrum of missions they will perform," said 1st Sgt. Darren Quackenbush. "Because of these soldiers' unique training and skills they can be called at any time as an individual or as part of the team to anywhere in the world."

Not only was the company conducting human intelligence gathering, but trained in reacting to Improvised Explosive Devices, suicide bombers and crowd management.

After a careful reconnaissance the teams entered the village and establish contact with local leaders. They must ascertain and identify the village's formal legitimate leaders and/or informal underground leaders. Then attempt to illicit in-

formation from the leaders either directly or indirectly. Often the teams then identify if the villagers are supportive of U.S. NATO Forces and if there insurgents and criminal elements.

While conducting HUMINT soldiers also reacted to crowds. As with any situation that is unique, soldiers can expect crowds to gather out of curiosity or hostility. The scenario can increase the number of contacts within the village as well as possibly becoming a high threat situation. Maneuvering and de-escalating the situation takes an experienced calm soldier which can only be developed by multiple types of realistic scenarios. This in turn builds the soldiers awareness and confidence in their skills.

Improvised explosives are currently the main threat to ally forces in the contemporary fighting environment. Thus, regular battles drill for these small teams. Additionally reacting to wounded soldiers, by providing first aid and evacuation of the casualty.

"It is imperative that the HUMINT collection teams conduct realistic training. It prepares them for the broad spectrum of missions they will perform. Because of these soldiers' unique training and skills they can be called at any time as an individual or

as part of the team to anywhere in the world," states 1st Sgt. Darren Quackenbush.

The 223rd Military Intelligence provides Counterintelligence (CI), Human Intelligence (HUMINT), Interrogation, Signals Intelligence operations/analytical support and foreign language support in the form of translators and interpreters to the Army and other agencies in the Intelligence Community. Additional missions include active Counter drug operational support, contingency missions, and emergency relief operations.

B/223rd Military Intelligence Battalion has a distinct and proud history. Their Soldiers have contributed to the success in multiple military campaigns and crucial missions, including deployments

to training exercises in Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, Japan, Kuwait, Philippines, Germany, and Korea, Ukraine, Russia, Canada, Honduras, Panama, Nicaragua, Italy, various locations throughout Pacific Rim, continental United States.

"B/223rd soldiers are some of the best in the world. They have up to two years of training and many are proficient in several languages. Most recently were awarded the meritorious commendation for providing information leading to the capture of Saddam Hussein," says Capt. Charles, Forward Operations Officer.

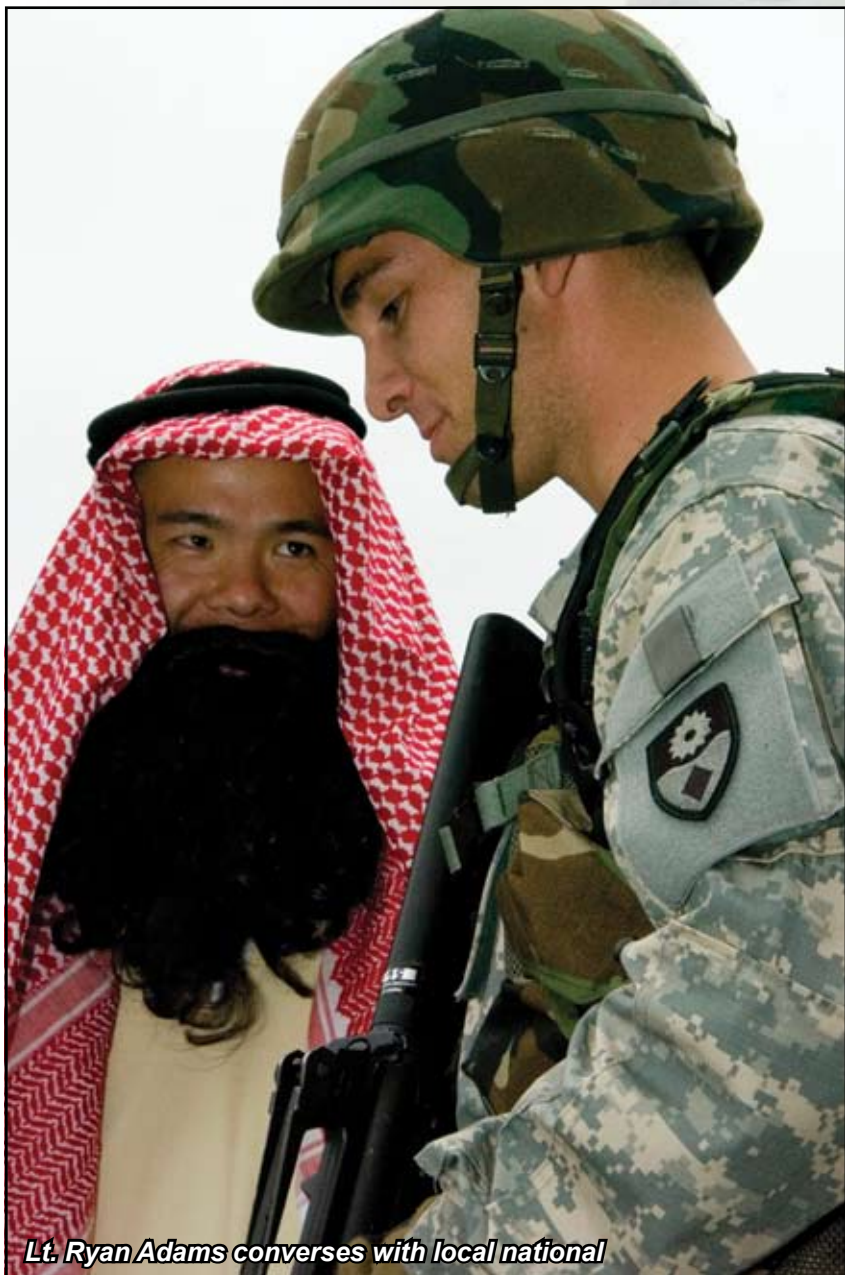
Formoreinformationonhowtobecome a member of B/223rd, email: darren.t.quackenbush@us.army.mil



Soldiers react to improvised explosive scenario

n ction

Volunteers from Defense Language Institute add realism



Lt. Ryan Adams converses with local national



Pfc. Yates and 2nd Lt. Thruelsen evacuate a soldier



Lt. Luis Cardenas & Sgt. Cris Ruiz meet with village leader

PHOTOS: SPEC. MICHAEL AMICY



Spotlight

Training Soldiers

Colonel Sylvia Crockett assumed command of the 223rd Infantry Regiment September of 2006. Col Crockett has had a distinguished career. She has served in positions of increasing responsibility ranging from Platoon Leader, Company Commander, Executive Officer, Battalion Commander and now Regimental Commander.

As the new Commander she faces the daunting challenge of insuring that the 223rd Rgmt trains soldier to the highest standard. The 223rd Infantry Regiment is the 'school house' for the California National Guard. Through its doors thousands upon thousands of soldiers from throughout the United States have been trained in numerous military specialty occupations and have received leadership training at all levels.

"As the incoming commander, my personal goal for this Training Year is to increase the number of Officer Candidate School graduates to a minimum class size of 50 and to focus on transformation. The 223rd will train and qualify soldiers in their Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) for the Military Police, Military Intelligence and Transportation Commands. I believe that the mission of the 223rd is absolutely essential to increasing and maintaining readiness in the California National Guard. I am confident that we will continue to keep pace with the many requirements while simultaneously focusing our efforts on expanding our curriculum. The men and women assigned to the 223rd, at all levels, are professionals who truly embrace the desire to teach, train and mentor soldiers at all levels."

With California being the most deployed state in the Union, the requirement for technically and tactically proficient soldiers is at an all time high. The 223rd Regiment plays a crucial role in insuring that soldiers are prepared to successfully

The 223rd instructs the following courses: Officer Candidate School, Infantry, Transportation, Scouts, Pre-command Course, Total Army Instructor Course, Military Intelligence, and many others as needed.

Editors Note: Col. Crockett is an OCS Graduate Class of 1985. She holds the distinct honor of being the first female to hold the position of Regimental Commander for the 223rd Regiment.



Soldier appointed as Chief Counsel for the California State Lottery

Donald Currier, 48, of Folsom, has been appointed chief counsel for the California State Lottery. Since 2004, he has served as a deputy cabinet secretary for the Office of the Governor. Previously, Currier was staff counsel for the Department of Veterans Affairs, director of the division of certification, assignments and waivers for the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, chief deputy director and chief legal counsel for the Governor's Office of Criminal Justice Planning and counsel to the Assembly Committee on Public Safety. He serves as a colonel in the Army National Guard and is the deputy commander of the 49th Military Police Brigade. Currier was recently deployed in this capacity to Iraq as the commander of the Police Partnership Task Force.

Editor's Note: The following article was published in the Sacramento Bee on May 7, 2005

By R.E. Graswich

Nice work by California Prison Industries chief Matt Powers, who dug into his pocket and tapped friends to throw a bash for Don Currier, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's deputy Cabinet secretary bound for Army duty in Iraq. Currier, a colonel in the California National Guard, inspired many around the Capitol by refusing to pull rank and avoid deployment. The Powers party was

highlighted by a speech from Department of Corrections boss Rod Hickman, who said, "The highest calling for anyone is service to others. No one demonstrates this better than Don Currier." The deployment will remove Don from his family and Governor's Office job for about 16 months. Among those honoring Don were District Attorney Jan Scully, retired CHP Commissioner Spike Helmick, Sacramento Undersheriff John McGinness, Davis Police Chief Jim Hyde, two Army generals and four colonels. "Don't forget to say a prayer for everyone else serving over there," Don said.



40TH ENGINEER SOLDIERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN IRAQ

By Ken L. Holder



Sgt. 1st Class David Adlard performs a quality check as a part of his official duties

BASRAH, IRAQ -- A group of California National Guardsmen from the 40th Engineer Brigade are making a difference in Iraq serving with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the Basrah Area Office of the Gulf Region South District. "There are three of us serving down here in Basrah," said Maj. Zac Delwiche, a liaison officer with the Oil Area Office. "We all have different jobs, but the Corps is making good use of all of our skills." Delwiche is joined in Basrah by fellow 40th Engineer Brigade soldiers Master Sgt. Bob Lamoureux and Sgt. 1st Class Dave Adlard. Both NCOs are performing as project managers, positions often held by commissioned officers and senior Department of the Army Civilians. "I am responsible for ensuring the work that the American people are paying for is being completed," Adlard said. "I act as the construction manager for a natural gas liquids (NGL) plant, a natural gas liquids/liquid petroleum gas (NGL/LPG) plant, and an LPG bulk storage facility," he said. Adlard works on a daily basis with five Iraqi engineers who each work at the various plants in his area. "I help them to understand the work that is being completed so they can effectively make daily reports. I also instructed them on our inspection and test planning processes," he said. Working with the

Iraqi engineers is something which Lamoureux also takes pride in as well. He says teaching the Iraqis about the benefits of proper use of safety equipment is particularly rewarding.

"One of the things I think the United States can share with Iraq is our dedication to keeping every worker safe," Lamoureux said. "I've worked hard both through my words and through my actions to make sure that the Iraqi associates I work with understand how important it is to always think about safety in every aspect of our work." Adlard is a 20 year veteran of the California ARNG and says that those with a desire to serve their country should consider volunteering. "We're making a difference over here," he said. "And I believe in what we are doing. The projects I'm working on will have a positive impact on the future of Iraq. Oil is their major export, plus they need to be self sufficient in LPG. The things I'm working on will make that a reality."

Delwiche says his work is enough to keep him busy and that's what he likes most about serving in Iraq. "My primary job is operations officer for the GRS Basrah Air Station. I oversee the movement and control of all private security de-

tails (PSD) assigned to the Corps in the province of Al Basrah. I also plan and develop visits for all distinguished visitors (congressional delegates, ambassadors, heads of state, ministers, general officers, and other high ranking civilians)," Delwiche said. He also serves as the director for the Regional Reconstruction Operations Center or RROC, which oversees all PSD movement in the four southern Iraqi provinces of Maysan, Al Basrah, Muthanna and Thi Qar. "I oversee the information flow of all incidents and movements for all private security companies registered in Southern Iraq," Delwiche explained. "I am the liaison officer between the Multi-National Division-Southeast and the USACE." Delwiche works with the MND-SE's civil effects and engineering staff

section (J9), where he coordinates, synchronizes and conducts staff planning for and with the British coalition forces to best approach the combined reconstruction efforts in southern Iraq.

While their work keeps all of them focused from sun-up to way past sundown, it is their concern for the Iraqis they work with that is universal. "Besides terribly missing my Fiancé, the worst thing about being in Iraq is the feeling of helplessness as the local engineers and support staffs go home to Basrah City each day," Delwiche said. "You wonder if they will make it back after all of the stories they tell of their neighbors being dragged out of their houses and shot, and most horrifically of all, the children that get injured or killed by mortars or small arms." All three of the 40th's Soldiers say they will take back a renewed sense of America's position in the world and the real skills they have picked up while serving at GRS. For some

it was renewing or reinvigorating the skills they already had, for others it will be applying new skills learned in country. For Delwiche it was more about applying the skills he learned in his AGR position in California. "My AGR position as the operations officer for the 579th Engineer Battalion was the best training for my operations job here in Iraq. At home I interact with local agencies, families of soldiers; local, state and federal representatives; senior military leaders, conduct planning and training, overseeing all administrative functions, logistical actions and issues and having a broad understanding of multiple areas." That job included working with mobilizing and demobilizing individual troops and entire units, answering obscure questions from family members, the media and the local community. "The broad spectrum of personnel that I worked with at home is not unlike my duties here in Iraq where I have to interact with lots of different military and public officials, conduct detailed planning, be personable and professional at all times as best I can and be able to respond and react to any situation 24/7," Delwiche said.

This tour of duty has deepened their senses of family and made them realize what they have waiting back home for them when they return. For Adlard and Lamoureux being separated has been the worst part of being in Iraq. "I miss being a part of my wife and children's lives," Adlard said. "If I had to point to the worst thing, that would be it."



Major Zac Delwiche visits an Iraqi Coast Guard FOB construction site.

Returning Home: Reuniting with Your Family after a Deployment

By Kimberly Crawford Gorski

Change. It is something we hope “home” never does. After every deployment, both service member and family realize that change is not only inevitable, but necessary. With change comes stress. According to Veterans Affairs, some common reunion stressors are; feeling like a stranger in your own home and not connecting with your children, parents, spouse or friends. Financial concerns, not feeling like a necessary part of the family, and worrying about future deployments were also listed.

What are the steps to getting back on track? Knowing what to expect from the reintegration process is the first step to making the reunion journey a more pleasant one.

The progression will not happen overnight, in fact, the average time frame for full integration can some-

times take as many months as the deployment. Be aware that emotional highs and lows are a natural part of the reunion process. Expect to take things slow!

The biggest challenge for most families is to regain a shared sense of purpose. Due to the extremely intense demands of deployment, the service member may hold a drastically different definition of his or her purpose. A spouse or parent who has managed to provide for the family and tend to the home front has also redefined their role. Also keep in mind the roles of children, some take on more responsibilities and identify themselves as a key player in the family dynamics.

The keys to establishing a new shared sense of purpose are: identifying issues brought on by sepa-



ration, define personal relationship expectations and understand each other's point of view. Patience and communication are the tools that make reunification work. Sharing your thoughts and feelings with each other will reduce stress, validate feelings, and strengthen your emotional bond.

Some service members will return physically wounded, mentally wounded or sick. As Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi, stated in a research and development article for the VA, “... We

have learned that every battlefield poses unique dangers. There are bullet wounds and shrapnel wounds, but there are those things that may not manifest themselves for years.”

It is healthy to be proactive and seek help if you find your reunion is a difficult one. Without assistance, mental health issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression and anxiety may develop. There are excellent, confidential treatment options available for you and your family.

For more Reunion information and resources please contact the Family Assistance Network at 1-800-449-9662 or visit our website <http://www.calguard.ca.gov/readyfamilies/FAC.htm> and www.guardfamily.org

Mental Health Services for the Soldier and Family

Military One Source: 1-800-665-4545

www.militaryonesource.com

VA's Vet Centers: 1-877-222-VETS (8387)

www.va.gov

The VFW (Veterans of Foreign War)

By Command Sgt. Maj. William Clark

The VFW can trace its roots to the Spanish-American War (1899) and the Philippine Insurrection (1899-1902). Many soldiers returned home wounded or sick. The organization was founded to secure rights and benefits for their service. The VFW primary mission is to “honor the dead by helping the living”.

In 1915, chapters were formed in Ohio, Colorado, and Pennsylvania and their ranks began to grow. National membership has grown to over 200,000 in the 21st century. The VFW's continues to be instrumental with presenting legislation to the Veterans Administration, creating such bills as the GI bill for the 20th Century, the National Cemetery system, compensation for Vietnam “vets” exposed to Agent Orange, and veterans diagnosed with Gulf War Syndrome.

The VFW has also been instrumental in securing funding for the Vietnam, Korean War, World War II and Women in Military Service memorials. In 2005, the VFW was the first veterans' organization to contribute to building the new Disabled Veterans for Life Memorial, which is currently being constructed in Washington.

Why join the Veterans of Foreign Wars? Membership in the VFW entitles you to a free \$1,000/\$1,500 personal accident protection policy, personal assistance securing government benefits for veterans, discounts on car rentals and hotel. You are also eligible to join the Pentagon Federal Credit Union. Members may also receive discounts for vision, dental, hearing aids, prescriptions, Chiropractic care, purchases, travel, car rental, vehicle insurance plan, Long-Term

Health Care, Cancer Insurance, and Senior Term Life.

Soldiers deployed in Support of Iraq and Afghanistan are eligible for VFW membership as well as those who have earned the Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon with Gold Border, the Combat Action Badge, the SSBN Nuclear Deterrent Patrol Insignia, and those who have served 30 consecutive days or 60 nonconsecutive days on the Korean peninsula. The soldier must also be a citizen of the United States.

The VFW has done an outstanding job supporting our veterans since its inception. As the United States Armed Forces continues to fight the Global War On Terror we can definitely count on the support of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.



Commentary on VFW submitted by Command Sgt. Maj. William Clark, Command Sgt. Maj. for California Army National Guard

Benefits & News

Military Spouse Education Resource Guide

Attention Military Spouses! There is now a one-stop guide that offers information on starting your education, available scholarships and grants, and the many opportunities that are accessible to military spouses. NMFA has designed a Military Spouse Education Resource Guide to identify educational opportunities available to military spouses.

Military.com also provides military spouses with access to several job training and educational opportunities. The Spouse Career Center offers career advice, a listing of military-friendly and milspouse-friendly companies, licensing and certification information, and resume writing center. For more information, visit Military.com/Spouse.

DVDs Wanted for Troops

"AMVETS, Operation DVD" is an appeal to patriotic Americans to donate their new and used DVDs, which will then be shipped to our fighting men and women overseas. DVDs will be distributed to Troops in audiences of USO tours and ultimately "Children Titles" will be provided to Boys & Girls Clubs located on military bases around the world. For more information on donating, visit the 'AMVETS, Operation DVD Website' at <http://www.operationdvd.us/>. "AMVETS, Operation DVD" is an official program of AMVETS, a nationally chartered veterans organization in existence for over sixty years.



Hiring Heroes Paves Road to Jobs

In its second year, the Hiring Heroes program has helped more than 1,000 injured service members and their families connect with potential employers. Hiring Heroes is co-sponsored by The Office of the Secretary of Defense, DoD's Military Severely Injured Center and Monster.com, a networking hub for current and former military people, defense workers and their families. For more information about Hiring Heroes events, call Karen Hannah, Hiring Heroes program manager, at (888) 363-4872 or e-mail her at Karen.Hannah@cpms.osd.mil.

Military Kids

The mission of Our Military Kids, Inc. is to ensure that the children (K thru 12) of deployed and severely injured Reserve and National Guard personnel can afford to participate in activities such as youth sports, fine arts and tutoring programs that are so important in their young lives during this stressful time. Based on statistics published by the Department of Defense, an estimated 77,000 children are eligible to participate in and benefit from this grant program. For more information on the program, visit the Out Military Kids website at <http://www.ourmilitarykids.org/>.

Getting a Jump on the Passport Process

The process to get a passport takes three to six weeks because of mailing, screening and coordination through official channels in Washington, D.C. The designated passport agent available at all active-duty and many Reserve bases can answer all questions about the process and is responsible for reviewing the application, processing the authorization for a no-fee passport and submitting it to the State Department. The base agent can also verify country requirements, or Airmen can look at the DOD foreign clearance guide at <http://www.Fcg.pentagon.mil>, which lists documents needed for travel to each country.

Legislation Increases Dependents' Education Benefits

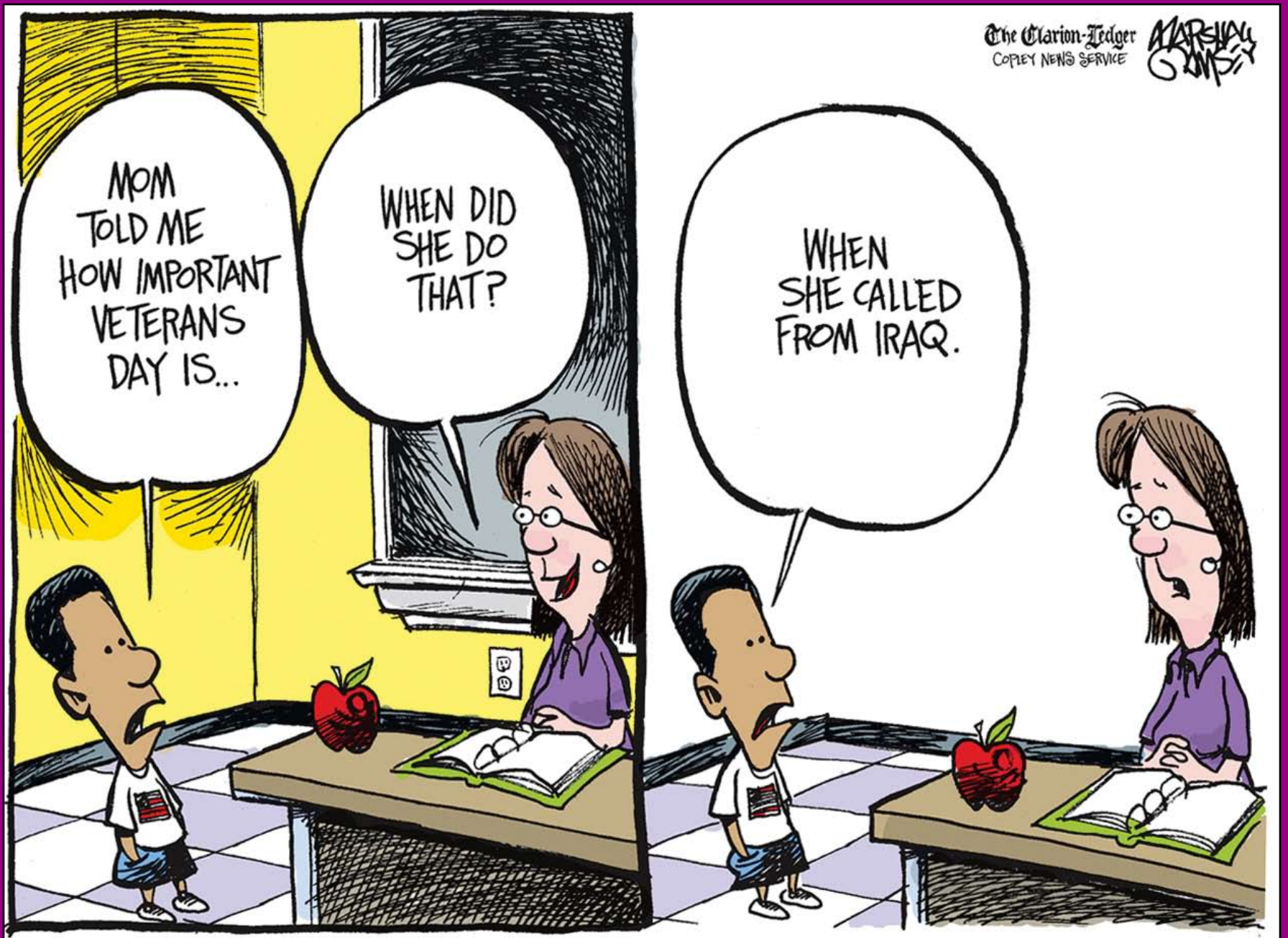
Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, Rep. Steve Buyer (R-Ind.) recently introduced the Disabled Warriors' Family Education Act of 2006. This bill will allow spouses and dependent children to access their Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance, under chapter 35 of title 38, United States Code, prior to the severely injured service member being discharged from active duty. Once the service member receives a VA rating stating that their injuries are permanent and total in nature the service member's spouse and college-aged dependent children may begin their education during the service member's convalescence period, which in some instances may be two years.

Army Contest Seeks Ideas

In a contest running now through Nov. 27, the Office of the Army Chief Information Officer/G6 is seeking entries that include a 500-word description of an idea – with examples – on how to keep Army networks, communications and information secure. The contest is open to active-duty and reserve-component Soldiers, civilian employees and supporting contractors. The winner will have his or her likeness and idea featured in January's On Cyber Patrol cartoon. Entries must include a brief IA-centric biography and will become the property of the OCP team. Entries with the participant's name, rank and unit should be e-mailed by 6 p.m. Nov. 27 to oncyberpatrol@hqda.army.mil with "OCP Contest" in the subject line.



PHOTO BY BRAD HARRISON



By Marshall Ramsey
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Grizzly Newsletter
is published by the Directorate of Communications
California National Guard 9800 Goethe Road Sacramento CA 95827.
Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army, the Department of the Air Force or the
California State Military Department.
Grizzly Newsletter is an official publication authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1 and AFI 35-101.
Grizzly Newsletter welcomes manuscripts photographs and feedback.
All such items should be sent to:
Editor *Grizzly Newsletter* California National Guard Directorate of Communications 9800 Goethe Road Sacramento CA 95827.
FAX: (916) 854-3630 or e-mail comments to: mirtha.villarreal@us.army.mil

Grizzly Newsletter

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